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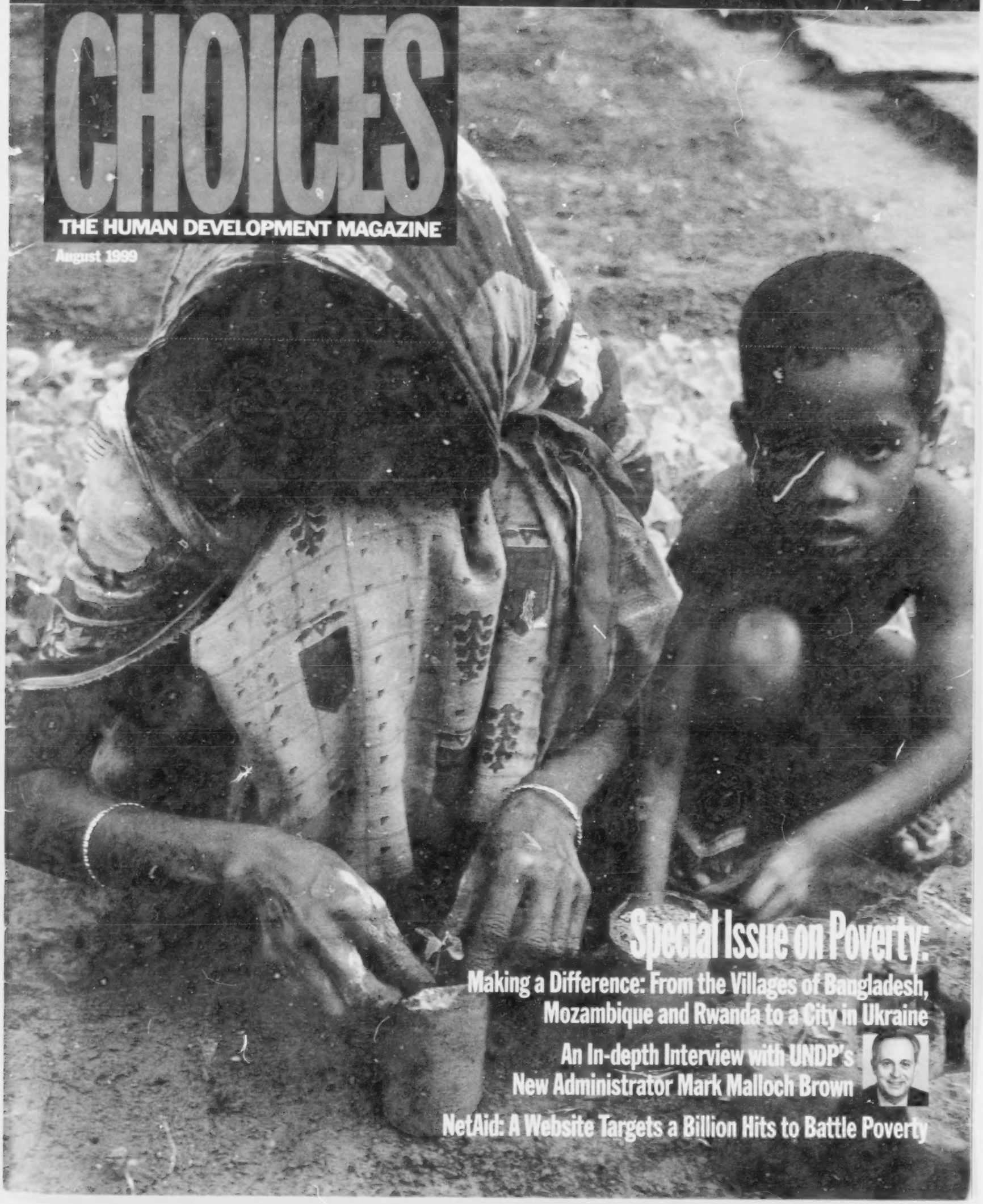
CHOICES

THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

August 1999



Special Issue on Poverty:

Making a Difference: From the Villages of Bangladesh, Mozambique and Rwanda to a City in Ukraine

An In-depth Interview with UNDP's New Administrator Mark Malloch Brown

NetAid: A Website Targets a Billion Hits to Battle Poverty

FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

Nyiraneza Agathe and her husband Sentore Gaby lived in the village of Shyanda in Rwanda with their six children. Today, five years after the genocide that took the lives of her husband and five of their children, Agathe and over 300 other widows are rebuilding their lives in the village. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is supporting their efforts by helping them to buy land and cultivate crops. In another part of Rwanda, UNDP has given some US$1 million to reconstruct schools and start income-generating schemes for villagers.

There are countless such stories from different regions of the world, where international organizations, working with governments, grassroots groups and other agents of change are helping to improve the lives of poor and marginalized people.

But much more has to be done. This year, the world's population will exceed six billion; 60 percent live in developing countries, where more than a billion people are living on less than $1 a day. Their poverty is not just limited to a lack of income. The absence of basic amenities, such as sanitation, clean drinking water and health services, means that almost a third of the world's people in the least developed countries have a life expectancy of just 40 years.

Four years ago, in 1995, 117 heads of State and Government and the representatives of 186 countries gathered at the World Summit for Social Development and pledged to eradicate poverty "as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind."

Now, as world leaders prepare for a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, in June 2000, to review the status of implementation of the commitments made at the Summit, they will need to consider the following. Donor countries are devoting fewer resources to fighting poverty in the developing world. Official Development Assistance (ODA) has fallen from 0.35 percent of donor states combined GDP in 1981 to 0.22 percent in 1997. Crippling debt continues to saddle poor countries, forcing cut backs in social programmes for the poor. In fact, African governments now transfer four times more money to international creditors than they spend on basic health and education. Debt relief, together with an increase in ODA, are therefore critical to the goals of poverty eradication.

The theme of this issue of CHOICES is poverty eradication, which is UNDP's central mission and overriding objective. Eighty-seven percent of UNDP's core resources (non-earmarked) go to low-income countries with annual per capita income of $750 or less.

In its poverty eradication programmes in communities around the world, UNDP's main objective is to empower the poor—to give them the opportunity and the tools to rise above poverty. To do so, the poor must be able to participate in the decisions that will affect their lives and to opt for the programmes they want and will be able to sustain. As one village elder in Kishoreganj in Bangladesh says, "We know that the village organizations will be here long after UNDP goes away." Good programmes achieve sustainable results.

Another critical factor in the eradication of poverty is good governance. UNDP's mission is to help countries build their national capacity to achieve sustainable human development. In several countries, UNDP is working with governments and civil society to decentralize planning and finances to district levels, so that communities can have a say in what is most needed at the grassroots level. When the poor participate in the decision-making process, they help to shape policies suited to their needs.

International organizations and governments do recognize this, and civil society is playing an even greater role than before in influencing national priorities. But this is not enough. Now, more than ever, the world community has to have the political will to help developing countries achieve their goals.

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A publication of the United Nations Development Programme

INTERVIEW

By Ashali Varma

MARK MALLOCH

Mr. Mark Malloch Brown assumed the leadership role of Administrator for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in July of this year, succeeding Mr. James Gustave Speth. Malloch Brown served as the World Bank's Vice President for External Affairs and United Nations Affairs for five years before taking the helm at UNDP.

In his first interview with CHOICES magazine, Malloch Brown expresses his views on UNDP's current role in the international development arena and his vision of how that role may evolve. He elaborates on UNDP's strategic advantages as a provider of development assistance.

Mark Malloch Brown as a field officer with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at a refugee camp in Khao i Dhang in Thailand (1979).

What do you believe is UNDP's strategic advantage as a provider of development assistance as it approaches the new millennium?

UNDP's strategic advantage lies in the universality represented by its presence in 137 countries and in its closeness to the governments of those countries. These unique attributes allow UNDP a role in helping countries to grapple with the challenges of change in the new millennium. Such challenges run the gamut from globalization, decentralization, the emergence of civil society and post-conflict situations, to whole new sets of management choices concerning the environment, social programmes, economic policy-making and international trade arrangements. As countries face these challenges, one firm friend will be there with advice and technical assistance to help them build the capacity they need to succeed, and that friend is UNDP.

Critics say there is duplication of effort in development programmes by international agencies; and there are calls for more cooperation among the multilateral institutions involved. What are your thoughts on these issues?

They are right, and I think we owe it to our development partners to take a hard look at what we do best and to acknowledge what they do best. While I completely subscribe to UNDP's central mission to reduce poverty and promote sustainable human development, other agencies, including the World Bank, have a similar mission at this point. It's part of UNDP's success to have brought many others to a common vision, but we must define where, within that vision, UNDP's particular value-added lies. Indeed, this is a central element of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's reform programme, and I look forward, as chair of the United Nations Development Group, to close coordination with our United Nations partners in providing clear, strategic direction to operational activities for development.

I believe UNDP's value-added lies in the area of advice and support for capacity building and not in funding many different projects that would be better financed by others with deeper pockets or more particular expertise. We have to be very tough-minded in choosing not just what to do but what not to do.

Given your experience of the World Bank, what do you think would be an appropriate form of partnership between UNDP and the Bank? Do you see discussions on this issue taking place in the near future?

Jim Wolfensohn, the Bank's president, and I have agreed to meet as soon as I have had a chance to really engage with UNDP, both at Headquarters in New York and, even more importantly, in the field. After the first months, we will have a "mini summit" to decide the priorities for partnership. The two institutions already have one very strong area of partnership, which is working together in Latin America, particularly in those countries where UNDP is already a major partner in a tripartite relationship with the Bank and the government.

There are also two new areas of partnership that I think will be of enormous importance. One is with governance. The 12th Replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), the Bank's concessionary lending arm, includes governance among the criteria that determine how the Bank allocates its funds. Because borrowing countries obviously want to maximize their access to IDA funds, they will have a real incentive to use UNDP's assistance to build up their governance capacity. UNDP and the Bank agree that this incentive will also be driven by the fact that governments recognize that governance is a critical criterion for successful development.

The second new area that I see UNDP working very much in partnership with the World Bank is under the Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework. It calls for catalytic consultation and participation with civil society to ensure that the government of a country is not only in the driver's seat regarding development strategies, but also that it speaks for a much broader development consensus in that country. UNDP is very well placed to help countries capitalize on that consensus-building, participation process.

BROWN

Good governance and transparency have become key issues in sustainable human development programmes. How can one achieve them without compromising UNDP's universality and impartiality?

UNDP's universality and the confidence that governments have in the organization are absolutely critical to its success, so we should not jeopardize either. That doesn't mean that, on a friend-to-friend basis, we cannot tell governments when there are issues we believe they should be emphasizing more. We must also recognize that countries will put different priorities on different elements of governance in capacity building. Some may think that building a system of environmental management is a much higher priority, for example, than assistance in election management. We should respect countries' rights to choose the capacity-building services they want to draw on from UNDP.

Given your expertise in communications, do you have any thoughts on ways to strengthen the recognition of UNDP in donor countries?

Over time, UNDP will put a lot more emphasis on communications. But first it must get the issues of business strategy and organization right. At present there is a blurred public perception of what UNDP is doing, as well as many questions about where its comparative advantages lie. One can't solve these communications problems in isolation from the bigger issue of where the organization is going. When we solve that issue, communications will flow naturally.

That said, we will put a lot more emphasis on relations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and with the private sector, constituencies that we have to carry with us. The success the Bank has had in the media, for example, is because NGOs and the private sector speak well of it. Earning that respect is not just a matter of briefing journalists more frequently, it's making sure that NGOs and the corporations working, say, in Africa, also view and support UNDP as a critical element in their vision for successful development in those countries.

Many legislators feel that significant amounts of money have been spent in developing countries with very little to show for it. What do you think you can do to counter donor fatigue?

This is a very real problem, and it's obviously one I have been grappling with a great deal in my years at the Bank and during the intermediate years when I was on the Board of a number of NGOs. For NGOs, fund raising has been quite difficult in recent years because of donor fatigue. My own view is that much of today's donor fatigue comes from our trying to push institutions rather than issues. ▶

"I'd like to see a UNDP whose signature services in its focus areas are recognized as distinct contributions to development."

It's an easily illustrated point in the commercial world. We are all interested in Coca Cola, not in The Coca Cola Company, just as we are all curious about the General Motor's motorcar we do or don't buy, and not in General Motors the corporation. And yet in the world of international organizations, we get caught up in trying to promote the institution rather than the issues.

We should be pushing the issues that we care about. For example, if we care about improving the capacity of developing countries to manage environmental challenges, that issue should carry us, as an organization, rather than trying to get the press to write stories about internal reform processes that aren't that interesting.

I think we have to be very outward looking and results-focused in our communications strategy. We must be able to go to parliamentarians and speak about what we have achieved together with our developing country partners. At the moment there is not enough talk about real results: successes and achievements.

To what extent do you think the private sector can be relied upon to counter donor fatigue?

If misunderstood, the private sector becomes a mirage in the desert; too many think that somehow the private sector can plug the vast hole in official development assistance but it can't. It's not a substitute for public sector funding.

The reality is that funding trends go up or down collectively. If government funding falls, then private corporate funding is likely to fall too. If you can reverse the downward trend in one, then they all go up, and that's what our vision has to be. We have to reverse the trend and to strike some partnerships with the private sector. But those partnerships cannot be about lending our good name to narrow commercial goals. We must find common ground where the private sector can exercise its commitment to development and to good social citizenship in partnership with us. And, certainly, these ventures must extend to NGOs and to a four-way relationship with our partner governments as well.

We just have to find ways of bringing the private sector into development on terms of benefit to all. We also have to find some breakthrough ideas on which we can operate: perhaps some big ideas for providing new information technologies to developing countries. Those are the kinds of innovations for which there is an appetite in the private sector.

In the past decade UNDP has based itself at the centre of the development policy debate with publication of the Human Development Report (HDR) and other studies. Do you feel this focus on development policy has been fully appreciated by donors and partners?

UNDP suffers from what always happens when a really good idea is so successful that people everywhere think they invented it. If it's any comfort, UNDP has a new administrator who knows exactly how significant the first two human development reports were and how important they continue to be. I refer specifically to the role of the HDR and of UNDP in the area of the concept of sustainable human development. I recognize UNDP's innovative role is not as broadly acknowledged as everybody would like. Being an old consultant, I know you have won when other people think your best ideas are theirs.

UNDP has experienced a major drop in the voluntary contributions to core resources made by its member countries. In contrast, contributions to non-core resources, which are earmarked for specific purposes, are growing. What do you think can be done to restore the strength of the organization's core resources?

I actually welcome the growth of non-core funding because it reflects confidence in many UNDP offices around the world. Not many development agencies can say that a lot of their money is raised locally with the strong support of the national government. This is an extraordinary vote of confidence. But I also hate the decline of core funds because it's really about a reduction of resources to Africa, and that is completely unacceptable for an institution committed to poverty reduction. We have to reverse this trend.

And I think we'll see core funding turn around. But again I would say that it will come out of getting the business strategy right and getting the communications to flow out of that; all these things work together. You don't go and fund raise first and then get the rest right afterwards. When the donor community sees that we are marching in step towards a common set of goals, and that, in a very businesslike way, we are measuring our progress towards those goals, then we become very results oriented, and funding levels will be restored.

Raising resources will take some time, and we are going to do it under the pressure of a budget crisis. I hope we can at least capture the silver lining of that crisis, meaning that we will have a real sense of urgency about demonstrating improved performance. It's a market test for UNDP. If we do better, our core-funding situation will turn around.

Where would you like to see UNDP be at the end of your first term as Administrator, in terms of programme focus areas and in terms of resources?

What I'd like to see in four years' time is UNDP as an organization that is talked about, that has a lot of buzz about it because it's at the centre of change management efforts in every country in which it operates. And I would like those countries to recognize that they have a companion, confidant, friend, and coach in UNDP. This is especially important over the next few years as those countries adjust to new globalized forces around them and to pressures coming up from an expanding civil society and a growing private sector. I'd like to see a UNDP whose signature services in its focus areas are recognized as distinct contributions to development. I would also like to see the United Nations Resident Coordinator system deliver a single effective UN service at the country level.

If UNDP can credibly perform those roles, then I promise you, we won't be worried about funding but about how we can keep on top of the growing workload. It means that we have this market incentive, this imperative to improve our performance. And I think because of what Gus Speth has done in terms of reorganizing UNDP, we are on the verge of capturing the real benefits and successes and going forward. If we can do that, this is going to be a wonderful four years for UNDP and for the development community. ■

WHAT IS THE WORLD WAITING FOR?

By Thierry Lemaresquier and Alejandro Grinspun

The eradication of extreme poverty remains the most outstanding pending assignment for the international community of nations. While considerable social progress has been achieved in many countries in recent decades, the fact remains that more people live in poverty today than at any other time in history. That this occurs at a time when the world has achieved an unprecedented level of material prosperity and technical prowess offends human dignity. It also violates the basic human rights of between one-fifth and one-fourth of the world's population, undermines economic growth and jeopardizes peace, democracy, security and environmental sustainability.

Fifty years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the right of every human being to a decent standard of living and to adequate health and education. And yet today millions of people throughout the world continue to be enslaved by poverty, joblessness, illiteracy, hunger and poor health.

Poverty eradication is the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP), "central mission and overriding objective." It strongly supports the commitment made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development to eradicate extreme poverty as "an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind." For this reason, UNDP has made the implementation of the Summit goals one of its main priorities, and is currently assisting some 100 countries to improve data collection and formulate national and local strategies for poverty reduction.

The fight against poverty must become a central and guiding objective of all development efforts.

Yet, as the world prepares to review how much progress has been made since the Social Summit, the prospects for eradicating poverty are unfortunately less promising than just a few years ago. This is partly because of the protracted financial crisis that has enveloped much of East Asia and is threatening to become a human crisis of major proportions.

It is now clear that while weaving some communities closely together, the forces of economic globalization are marginalizing entire countries and regions. Coupled with economic reforms that open up trade and financial markets, globalization seems to be increasing the gap between rich and poor, making the task of eliminating poverty increasingly difficult.

Millions of poor households are being devastated by Asia's financial turmoil, with breadwinners' livelihoods suddenly undermined, food in short supply, and dashed hopes for a better future. The crisis demonstrates just how vulnerable economies have become to global forces. Unless ways are found to manage globalization and increase the benefits accruing to developing countries and to poor people, the 21st century may bear witness to a world that is at the same time more integrated and more polarized and segmented.

Restoring robust economic growth is essential for everyone in the developing world but especially for the poor and other vulnerable groups who are suffering the most from recession. Governments must enact policies that expand economic opportunities for disadvantaged households and communities, make them less vulnerable to future shocks, and give them a voice in managing their own affairs. Fast and balanced growth is also urgently needed in the heavily-indebted countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where debt repayments are mortgaging the future of innumerable families.

But growth is hardly an end in itself. It is beneficial only when it empowers the poor—when it gives them access to assets and markets, closes the gaps between men and women, and safeguards people's options for the future. A more humane society, free of poverty, also requires transparent and democratic systems of governance. And, above all, eradicating extreme poverty calls for harnessing the strengths and capabilities of poor people themselves, of community groups, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

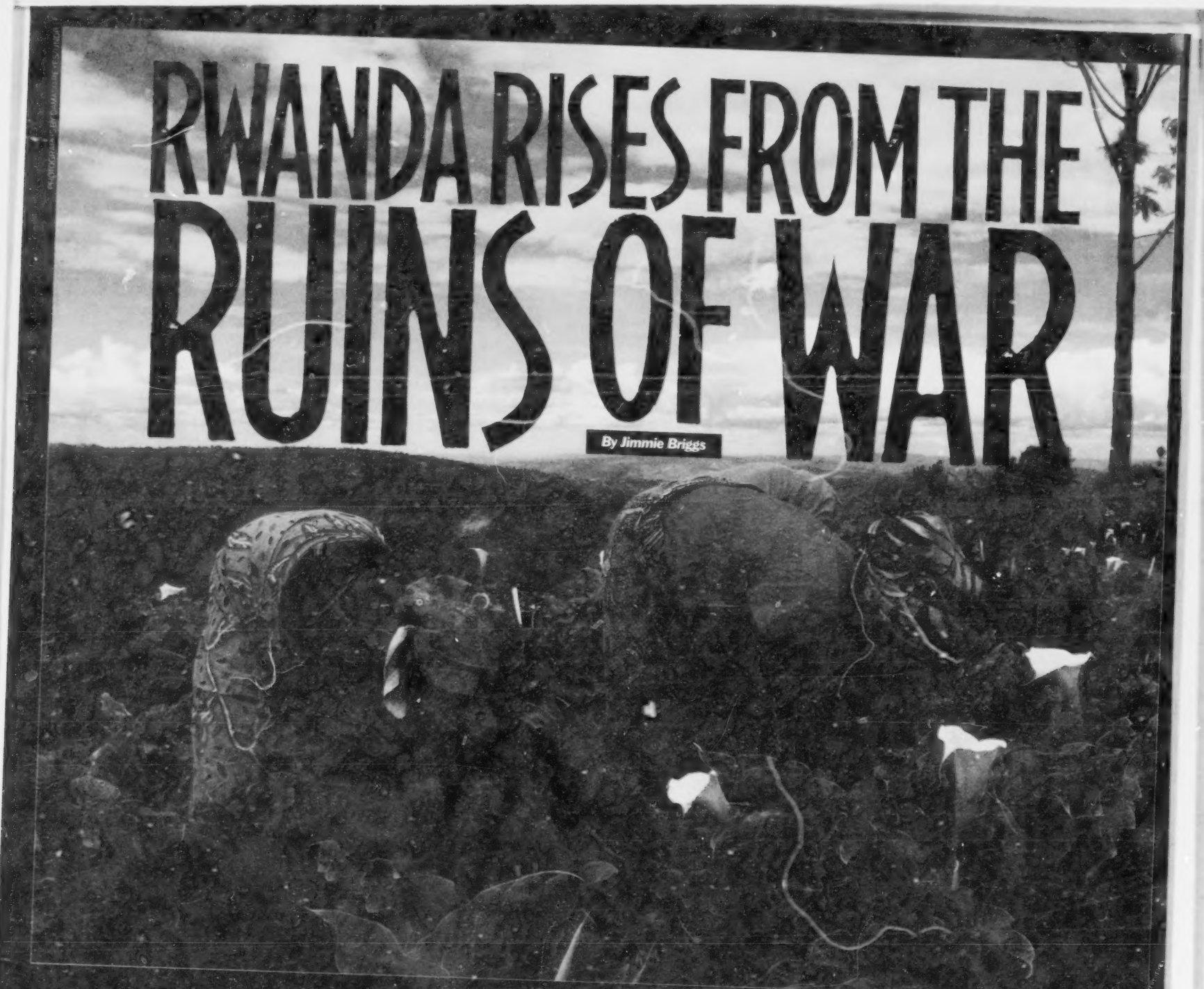
Despite recent setbacks, there is still cause for optimism. UNDP's 1998 report, *Overcoming Human Poverty*, (available from UN Publications: www.un.org/publications), shows that governments, development agencies and civil society organizations are rallying behind the goals set by the 1995 Social Summit. Many countries are already translating their promises into action. For instance, nearly 80 percent of governments around the world have taken the first step toward ending poverty by measuring its extent and identifying its causes; about 60 percent have formulated initiatives to fight it. The next important step is to set specific targets and deadlines for wiping out poverty and to ensure that sufficient resources are dedicated to this purpose. To date, less than one-third of the world's governments have such targets in place.

Ending extreme poverty is within humanity's reach. But for this to occur, the fight against poverty must become a central and guiding objective of all development efforts. Good health, adequate nutrition, literacy and employment must be treated as essential human rights, as they were when the international community came together to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. ■

Thierry Lemaresquier is the former Director of the Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division (SEPED), UNDP. He is currently the UN Resident Coordinator in Chile. Alejandro Grinspun is the Policy Adviser on Poverty at SEPED.

RWANDA RISES FROM THE RUINS OF WAR

By Jimmie Briggs



Women in the Abishyizehamwe collective grow flowers to sell in Kigali.

Butare, Rwanda—Before 21 April 1994, Nyiraneza Agathe had a comfortable and peaceful life in the village of Shyanda in the Butare prefecture of Rwanda, one of 12. Agathe worked in an administrative office of the local government. She had a husband, Sentore Gaby, and six children. Then the genocide against the Tutsi and moderate Hutu population arrived at her doorstep. Neighbours murdered her husband and five of her children.

"We really didn't know what was happening when the killings started," recalls Agathe, sitting in a commissary store in Butare. In several weeks time, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) gained control of Shyanda and Agathe returned. Homeless, she and a group of other widows took shelter in schools and abandoned structures. Many were without families or options to earn money. At the suggestion of two local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the widows decided to start a group devoted to their needs, "Duhonze," which means "consoling us" in Kinyarwanda.

Through the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Africa 2000 Network grant, Duhonze's 333 women have received US$38,762 to pay for livestock, food storage and seed. The organization buys plots of swampland to grow vegetables, such as sorghum, potatoes and aubergine; each member has her own plot to cultivate. A store operated by the women at their headquarters provides food and supplies to the community at wholesale prices. Duhonze has also started a vocational school to teach writing, sewing and typing to youths too old for primary school.

Nearly a third of Rwandan households are headed by women. Children too, are being forced to care for themselves and younger siblings. A study published by World Vision International and supported by the United Nations Children's Fund showed that over 300,000 children in Rwanda are living without adult care since the deaths of their parents.

"There were a great many tears at our first [organizational] meeting," says Agathe, now 41 years old. "It helped a lot to express the pain and share our feel-

ings." Like most widows in Duhonze, Agathe has taken in orphaned children left stranded by the war. "Reconciliation is coming slowly," observes Agathe. "We realize that we have to live together and rely on each other for assistance."

Jobs for parents, schools for children

In Rwanda, UNDP also works in partnership with an Irish NGO called Refugee Trust. With it, UNDP supports locally-based projects to build the educational system as well as to encourage the start-up of small, or micro-enterprises. The fruits of this collaboration has produced 24 new classrooms and the overhaul of 41 more. "This relationship is a part of a new generation of programmes between NGOs and the United Nations," explains Vincent O'Reilly, deputy executive director of Refugee Trust. "Normally, the people don't even see UNDP because the funds go straight to the government, but here communities are aware of the relationship."

One Refugee Trust project resulted in the construction and rehabilitation of five schools in the village of Giti and four in Mugambazi. UNDP gave $997,000 for that effort. "Education is the key to national reconciliation and skills-building in the future," says O'Reilly. "This must break down the barriers of ethnicity, gender, and age-bias."

Along with the schools, Refugee Trust developed a programme with UNDP's support to address the need for income-generating projects for the villagers. The first project launched was "Abishyizehamwe," a collective of flower growers in the village of Mugambazi, a spectacular region nestled in the mountains of the Kigali prefecture. It included the initial planting of *Amorama*, a spiral-shaped, yellow-bulbed flower with a rich scent. The investment included insecticide, fertilizers, tools and equipment. The success of that project allowed the group to start growing potatoes, passion fruit and strawberries. A market in Kigali receives flower deliveries from Mugambazi twice a week, as well as strawberries for a jam factory. The money from these sales pays for other farming projects.

"Before the genocide, we were growing flowers but not together," says Mwingabire Theonile, head of the association. "Production was low."

"Education is the key to national reconciliation and skills-building in the future."

Abishyizehamwe has not only given villagers a chance to improve their standard of living but has also enabled them to rely less on the labour of their children, thus increasing the number of children attending school. "This type of project is about empowering people to successfully enter the social sector with sustainable jobs," says O'Reilly.

East of Mugambazi and an hour's drive northeast of Kigali City is the community of Giti, the only area in Rwanda where genocide was not committed. "The RPF arrived quickly after the genocide started," explains Wellars Buyunderi, the bourgemeistre since 1996. "Also, relationships between the ethnic groups were good. The people in this village have always tried to provide a good example." Over 65,000 people sought refuge in Giti.

Today a group of Giti's villagers have formed a collective called "Tuzamurane" and have a steady income because of an agricultural project aided by UNDP through Refugee Trust. At present, the group is growing sorghum, soybeans and tomatoes. Refugee Trust worked with them in getting tools, training, fertilizer and seed. An advisor assists the group in planning out schedules and crop management.

At the Rwesero Primary School in Giti, teacher Mukamusoni Monique is writing algebraic formulas on a chalkboard. Approximately 800 students attend the school, which was refurbished with the aid of UNDP and the Japanese government. "I've been at the school for two years and the number of students we have here has increased," says Monique.

A shy, lanky 16-year-old named Laurien is one of the students learning algebra. He has been attending Rwesero for six years. Standing outside Monique's algebra class in short black pants and a striped shirt, the changes he notes since his father became a member of the farming collective are basic but important. "There's enough food and getting school materials is much easier than before," he says.

Rebuilding lives, re-teaching skills

In addition to its work with Refugee Trust, UNDP has collaborated with the Government of Rwanda and other NGOs to assist in the country's development and the reconciliation process. A UNDP Trust Fund created in January 1995 gives donor nations a way of providing economic assistance. Some $100 million has been raised for the fund, with the largest contributions coming from Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States. "There are some tremendous challenges to be faced here," observes Stephen Browne, the United Nations' resident coordinator. "What's happening in Rwanda is really quite extraordinary. The scars are deeply engrained. What we as donors must not ignore are the deeply embedded causes of the genocide."

"Every skill imaginable must be re-taught," says Browne. Many Rwandans who had professional abilities in fields such as law, medicine, business and education either fled when the genocide started or were killed. Some 90 percent of the population was forced to leave home in the last five years and resettlement is still under way.

Schools like the Rwesero primary school give new hope to the children of Rwanda.

Finally, the system of justice and government must be rebuilt. During the genocide in 1994, it is estimated that 500,000 to one million people were killed. Two-thirds of the judges in the country were killed or escaped. For Rwanda to get back to normal it will have to work at strengthening its justice system and its political and social institutions. ■

Jimmie Briggs, a freelance journalist, is producing a documentary project on children and war as an Individual Project Fellow of the Open Society Institute. He is a contributor to publications, including Emerge, XXL, ICON, The Source *and* VIBE.

Kishoreganj's Success

By Ranjit Dev Raj

Kishoreganj, Bangladesh—How does Razia Begum's vegetable nursery grow? Spinach, cauliflower, cabbage, eggplant and papaya seedlings all in a row.

These are happy times for Razia. She has just repaid a 3,000 taka (US$65) loan she borrowed from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to buy her own little piece of land in the Bhaturpura village in Kishoreganj district, a 300 square kilometre area of verdant hills, paddy fields and ponds in northeastern Bangladesh. For the first time in her 35 years, Razia can picture a secure future for herself, her three school-aged children and her husband, Fazur Ali, a petty shopkeeper.

"Once I repay the additional 5,000 takas ($108) I borrowed for seeds and fertilizer through the Bhaturpura East Female Village Organization, I can look forward to a steady income by selling vegetable seedlings from this plot of land," Razia said.

No one can say how Kishoreganj town (the district headquarters), which is served by a railway station from the colonial period, grew so decrepit. The town boasts no less than 22 government departments, including those of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, cooperatives, family planning, health, education, social welfare, employment, statistics, police; all are housed in fine buildings. But the elaborate system somehow does not connect with the 250,000 people in the surrounding farmlands it is intended to serve.

Most of Kishoreganj district lacks electricity; the literacy rate is 16 percent; and half of its 46,000 households eke a living

Against Poverty

out of plots of land of 0.5 acres or less. The story is much the same in most of rural Bangladesh. With a per capita annual income of $220, Bangladesh is among the world's 15 poorest countries. Its predominantly rural economy supports what is probably the world's highest human density with an average of 850 people per square kilometre.

An impetus to change

In 1994, the UNDP-supported South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) picked Kishoreganj Thana, a subdivision of the district, for a pilot project whose implementation began in 1996. SAPAP started with a radically pro-poor perspective that relied heavily on social mobilization at the grassroots level.

"At Kishoreganj Thana, the main task was to bridge the gap between people and government by mobilizing the poorest people into village organizations which could take advantage of the existing system and local resources," says Badiur Rehman, National Project Coordinator of the programme. The organizations help members to identify and solve their problems with seed money and technical and administrative support from UNDP. At the heart of the enterprise is a self-managed credit programme that benefits individuals like Razia. Credit also goes to community projects that the villagers think are important and feasible.

Enrolment was no problem because the village organizations offered a revolutionary 8,000 takas ($173) of credit to people who had nothing to offer as collateral. The main requirement was regular attendance at weekly meetings and a willingness to put aside some savings, Rehman said. By end 1998, some 750 village organizations had emerged—half of them were run for and by women. And it turned out there was no dearth of trainable managerial material.

At 22, Kabir Khan is the manager of an organization in Rashidabad, one of the 11 administrative units of Kishoreganj Thana. His authority is on display at a late evening cluster meeting of about 15 village organizations at Sagra, one of the few electrified villages in Kishoreganj Thana. Business and accounting over, Khan signals the start of a cultural programme of plays and skits in which the villagers enthusiastically participate. It is a picture of productive community cohesion. And amazingly there is no visible conflict with the established order. Says Angur Mia, the elderly chief of Sagra village, "We were happy to make way for elected managers like Kabir Khan."

According to Khan, managers still defer to the elders on social matters. "But we have the advantage of UNDP-training in formulating plans, writing reports, need analysis, bookkeeping, credit management and auditing." The managers also have a working knowledge of modern horticulture, fishery, livestock and poultry, health and sanitation and other activities identified as worth investing village funds in.

Angur Mia said the UNDP programme started with community building. "As elders this is something we understand. It was also important for the people to feel that they, rather than some government department or NGO, owned and ran the programme," he said. "We know that the village organizations will be here long after UNDP goes away." According to Angur Mia, if conflict between the new and old generation leaders is rare, it is because the managers are known to the villagers for capability and integrity.

Women take the lead

Female organizations seem to be the real vehicle for rapid social transformation in Kishoreganj Thana. The Bhatrish-Basurdia female organization, begun in 1995, has a membership of 129 and a

Farmers buy baby fish to seed their ponds.

total savings of 250,000 takas ($6,000). The organization has given out 1.9 million takas ($43,000) worth of credit for micro-industries such as cloth weaving and rice-husking, traditionally handled by women. A few of the women are also into activities such as fisheries, poultry or shop keeping.

The members at Bhatrish-Basurdia, are required to learn how to read and write. One consequence of the resulting rise in literacy is rising expectations. "I married off my elder daughter Modina when she was only 17. That was not such a good idea. I want my younger one Rosina to go to college, and so I pay for her to have private tuition out of the extra money," says Sofiya, the wife of a rickshaw puller. Sofiya took a loan of 5,000 takas ($108) to start a rice business and never regretted it. "What my husband earns is spent on family expenses and what I earn goes into savings," says Sofiya.

Shamsul Neha says she borrowed money from the organization to pay off a local money-lender who was charging her an usurious 30 percent interest. A 11,000 taka ($239) loan at the 10 percent interest charged by her organization allowed her to stabilize her cloth business, as well as to construct a tin-roof home, a status symbol in Kishoreganj Thana. Money lenders are no longer the menace they used to be in these parts.

The Bhatrish-Basurdia female organization is proud to be functioning from its own premises—a large tin-roof hall with a dirt floor and no electricity. "We no longer need financial help from UNDP," Fatima Khatun, the manager says. The organization now deals with the state-owned Bangladesh Krishi Bank for both credit and savings and exemplifies the desired sustainability.

The villages of Kishoreganj Thana abound with success stories that stem from the ingenuity of the people helped by UNDP. Abdus Salam borrowed 5,000 takas from the Nilapara village organization to convert the one-acre plot he owns into a rice-field-cum-fishpond.

"All I had to do was dredge out the plot and I had a rice-field in the dry season and a fish pond during the heavy monsoons." He also has a fringe of fruit trees around the plot and plans to buy a cow.

Abdul Hannan, manager of the East Tanpara organization, not only gets milk from his cow but also uses its dung for a biogas plant. Hannan uses the gas for lighting as well as cooking fuel. The biogas plant was set up by Shafiqul Islam, a UNDP programme manager who used his engineering background to design a cheap, affordable version for Kishoreganj district. Hannan is confident that he can supply biogas units for as little as 10,000 takas ($300) a set, should a village organization vote to invest in it. "Two or three households can share one plant," he says.

Village priorities come first

Though the individual successes of Salam, Hannan and Sofiya stand out, they owe much to their organizations, which discussed, identified and supported their projects. Often organizations give priority to a community project over an individual one. At Gobindapur, villagers are completing a school building they decided was more important than anything else. Says eight-year-old Rahima, "I used to walk three kilometres to the nearest school till this one came up."

There is another reason for excitement in Gobindapur. The villagers have just revived an ancient irrigation pump which lay unused for years. They invested 25,000 ($540) takas borrowed from UNDP for repairs. "We even had money left over to build a sluice," says Abdul Mannan, manager of the Gobindapur organization.

The village organizations are more than just banking and planning institutions. They form the only social safety net for the villagers whose marginal existences are precarious. Says Lena Hasle, a programme officer with UNDP, "A costly illness could easily upset a small family budget." When Golap Mian, a carpenter's assistant lost a leg in an accident, his organization loaned him 2,000 takas ($43) to set up a small shop. Golap Mian not only repaid that loan but is now building a larger shop with a fresh 8,000 taka ($173) loan which he comfortably repays at 166 takas ($3) a week.

Since most of the investment is in agricultural production there is an abundance of nutritious food in Kishoreganj Thana. It will be some years before the benefits of better nutrition, sanitation and education become visible. But the organizations are already helping the villagers to live sustainably off the land.

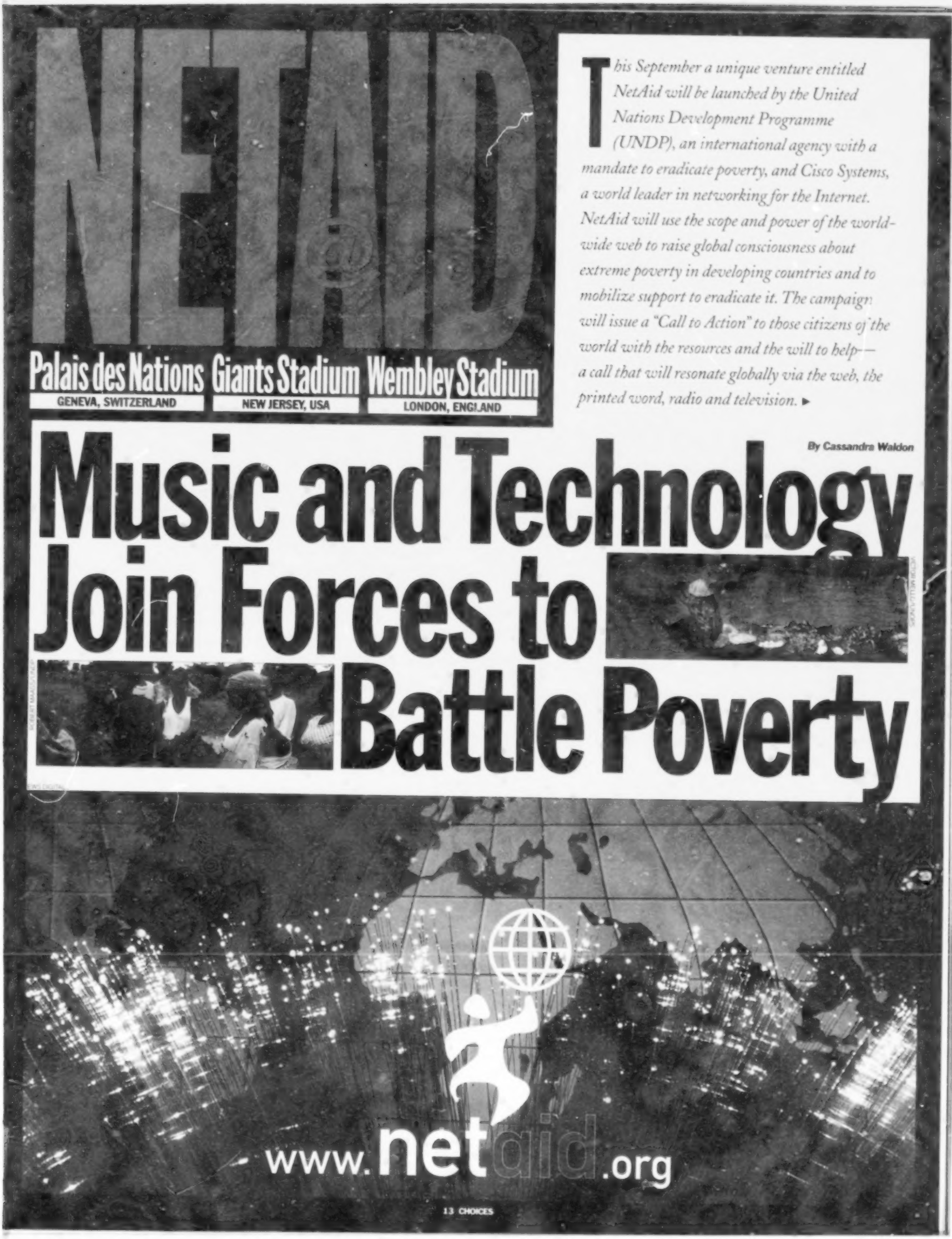
The Kishoreganj project depends on an army of activists, people hired by UNDP who mobilize and impart skills in fishery, poultry, livestock management and horticulture to the villagers. "They learn fast and often come up with sound suggestions," says Ghulam Azam, a livestock specialist with UNDP who runs a course in cattle vaccination and beef-fattening at Tilaknathpur village. Currently, there are 1,731 activists.

But the skills the villagers value most is how to interact with officials in the government departments, banks and non-governmental organizations from a position of strength. "Before the project started we did not know what to ask for or even that we could ask at all," said a manager.

For generations, the development process in Bangladesh has been directed from the top down. "By promoting community empowerment, UNDP is contributing to better local governance where people themselves own both the decision-making process and the resulting projects," says David Lockwood, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh. "This leads to a more sustainable development model which can be replicated with the combination of local funds from commercial banks, NGOs and government grants, and not one dependent on external assistance." ■

"Before the project started we did not know what to ask for or even that we could ask at all," said a manager.

Ranjit Dev Rai is special correspondent with the United News of India *news agency and India correspondent for the* Inter Press Service.


NETAID
Palais des Nations
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
Giants Stadium
NEW JERSEY, USA
Wembley Stadium
LONDON, ENGLAND
This September a unique venture entitled NetAid will be launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), an international agency with a mandate to eradicate poverty, and Cisco Systems, a world leader in networking for the Internet. NetAid will use the scope and power of the world-wide web to raise global consciousness about extreme poverty in developing countries and to mobilize support to eradicate it. The campaign will issue a "Call to Action" to those citizens of the world with the resources and the will to help—a call that will resonate globally via the web, the printed word, radio and television. ▶
Music and Technology Join Forces to Battle Poverty
By Cassandra Waldon
www.netaid.org
13 CHOICES

What the Organizers say about NetAid

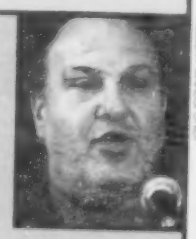
"In my eyes, the UNDP/ Cisco Systems project is an exciting opportunity for the United Nations and its partners, including those in civil society, to call attention to—and spark concrete actions to wipe out—the worst aspects of social and economic deprivation." —Kofi Annan

"NetAid will showcase the central importance of cutting-edge communications technologies that bring people together from all walks of life around the world to identify and deploy viable solutions to the urgent poverty challenge."—*John Chambers*

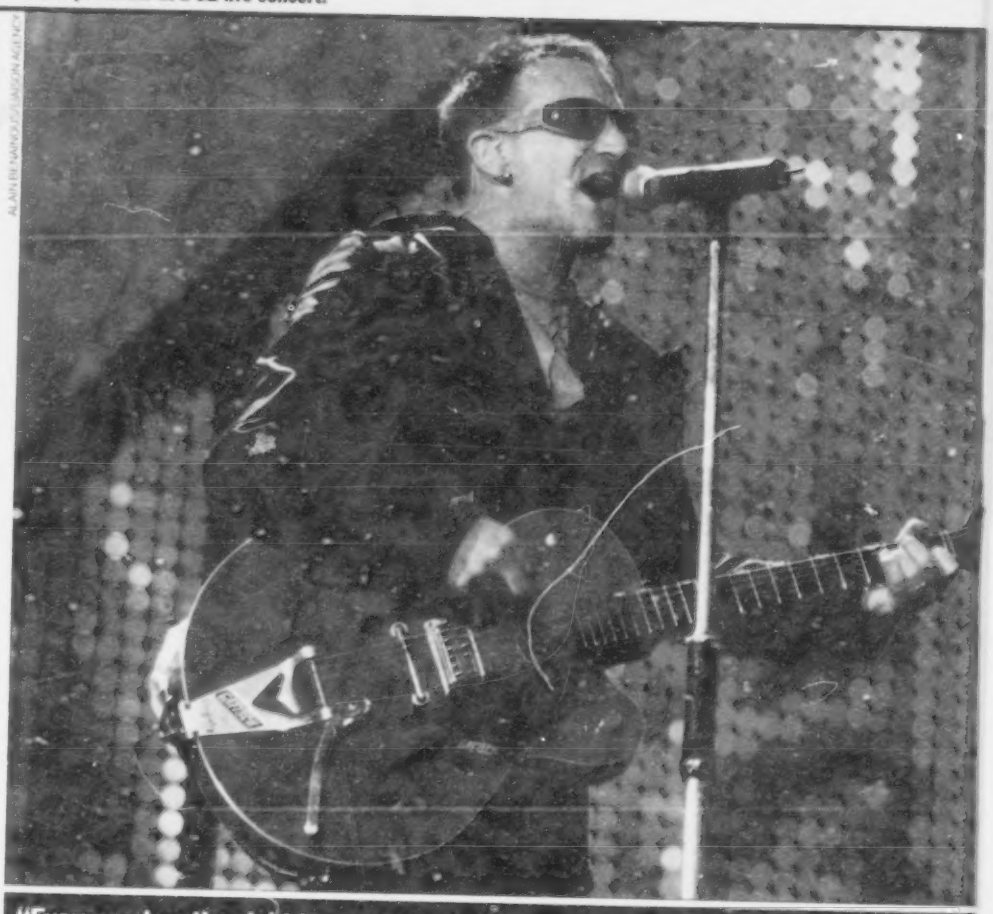
"The Internet is an extraordinary empowerment tool, and one that I am planning to use extensively through UNDP's network of country offices, both for increased efficiency and as a means of reaching our development goals." —*Mark Malloch Brown*

"This is the biggest programme I've ever been with. It is also the biggest thing that we could have been asked to be committed to in our lives. It is extremely important, and I think we're all grateful for the opportunity to be a part of it." —*Harry Belafonte*

"Live Aid, We Are The World, Hands Across America and Imagine—all of those musical experiences left indelible impressions on our minds and souls... I know that NetAid will do the same for the issue of poverty eradication around the world."—*Danny Glover*



"Music is the only language that crosses all barriers, and the music industry has once again decided to make a stand —this time to help eradicate extreme poverty." —*Harvey Goldsmith*



Bono performs at a U2 live concert.

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services." —UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The NetAid website (www.netaid.org) will be launched on 8 September at a press conference organized to coincide with a UNDP awards ceremony to honour individuals who have made remarkable contributions to the fight against poverty. It will capture the world's attention on 9 October, when it showcases top artists in concert in Geneva, London and New York. On that occasion, the website will feature an amalgam of information on programmes that help poor people in the developing world and what web viewers can do to support them. It will also feature live performances by the artists.

Bono of the band U2, and Wyclef Jean of The Fugees, are among these artists. They have teamed up to record the song, *New Day*, the proceeds of which will benefit NetAid and the Wyclef Jean Foundation. *New Day* will be one of the songs performed simultaneously during a moment of unity at the 9 October event by artists in all three cities.

During the nine-hour concert event, the NetAid site, the largest undertaking of its kind to date, is expected to draw two million visitors

an hour. Some 1,800 servers set up worldwide will carry its message across the globe. The venture's organizers are looking to generate a billion hits to the site.

After the event, the NetAid site will serve as a global forum for those who wish to exchange ideas and to work together to channel the efforts of individuals and organizations to eradicate extreme poverty. It will offer information about the activities of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and individuals

involved in the fight against poverty. It will also provide suggestions and specific ways on how individuals and organizations can participate. A special not-for-profit organization, the NetAid Foundation, will be set up to channel donations received via the site.

The second industrial revolution

Cisco Systems President and CEO John Chambers says the Internet can be a formidable weapon in the battle against poverty. "Whether it is managing a small loan programme to purchase sewing machines for a women's cooperative in Jordan, or accessing medical expertise for remote clinics in Southeast Asia, or educating people about how they can make a difference, the Internet can play a key role."

The Internet, he believes, marks the "second industrial revolution," because it has the potential to change the lives of millions of people.

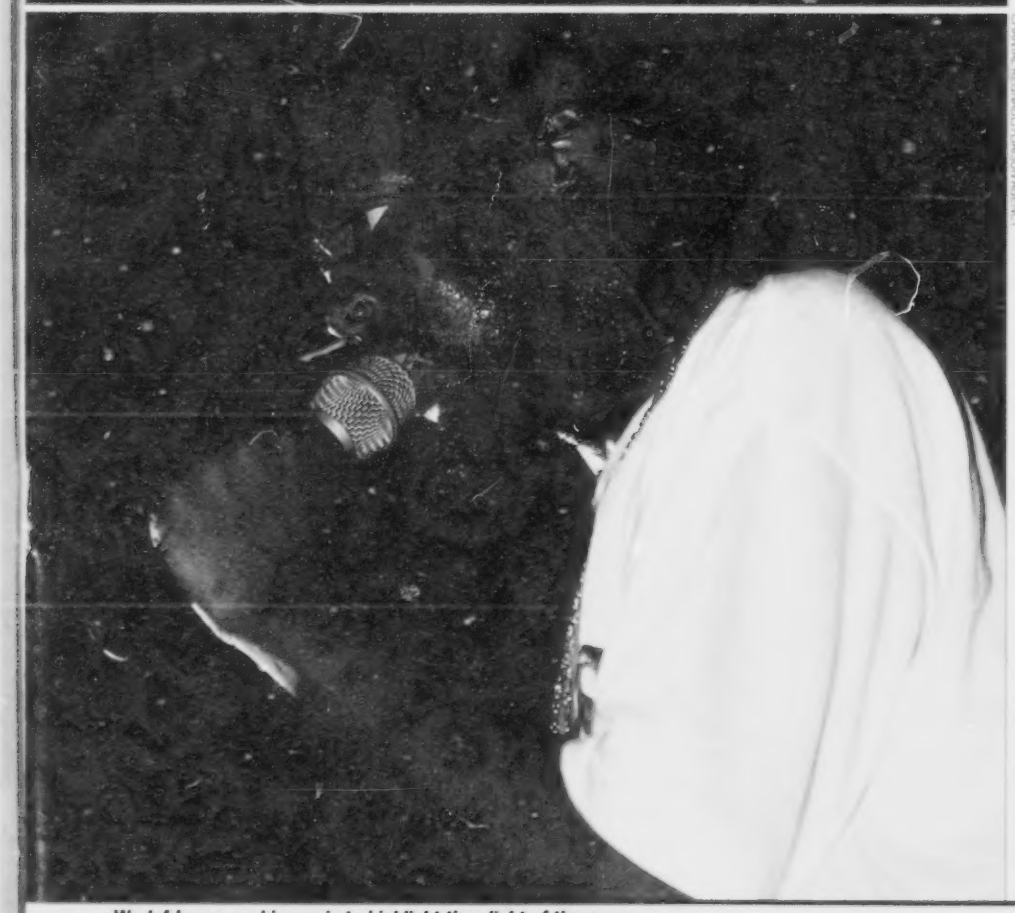
UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown agrees. He says information technology such as that showcased by NetAid will help build strong constituencies for development. "NetAid is more than just concerts," comments Mallock Brown, "It is the emergence of a long-term global website dedicated to helping the people of the developing world."

Personally committed to the cause

The sponsors of the NetAid project represent the United Nations, lead corporations in the information technology field, and the entertainment industry. For the UN, the UNDP Poverty Eradication Committee, working under the auspices of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, is overseeing the initiative. Artist Danny Glover, Nane Annan, wife of the Secretary-General, and Malloch Brown co-chair the

Continued next page ▶

"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich." — JOHN F. KENNEDY



Wyclef Jean uses his music to highlight the plight of the poor.

NETAID

MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY JOIN FORCES TO BATTLE POVERTY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1999

27 APRIL — The United Nations, New York, USA

UNDP, Cisco Systems and concert promoters and producers hold press conference for NetAid: The NetAid poverty awareness campaign is officially announced by outgoing UNDP Administrator, James Gustave Speth, John Chambers and Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette.

8 SEPTEMBER — Millennium Hotel, New York, USA

Press Conference: At this media event, UNDP and Cisco Systems will launch the NetAid website and premiere the *New Day* music video recorded by Bono and Wyclef Jean especially for NetAid.

8 SEPTEMBER — General Assemby Hall, United Nations, New York, USA

Awards ceremony hosted by UNDP and launch of the NetAid website: This event sets the stage for the commemoration, on 17 October 1999, of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Six people will receive awards for their contributions to the global fight against poverty. The programme will include appearances by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, Cisco Systems President and CEO John Chambers, UNDP Poverty Eradication Committee Co-Chair and Goodwill Ambassador Danny Glover and artists Bono and Wyclef Jean. Over 1,600 people will attend, including corporate leaders, celebrities, dignitaries, members of the UN community, non-governmental organizations and the media.

9 OCTOBER — Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland; Giants Stadium, New Jersey, USA; Wembley Stadium, London, England

NetAid Global Concerts: On 9 October, artists at all three concert venues will come together via satellite to simultaneously perform songs, including *New Day*, recorded by Bono and Wyclef Jean. Performances will be broadcast over the worldwide web, radio and television. An estimated 65,000 tickets will be sold for Wembley Stadium, 45,000 for Giants Stadium. There will be invitation-only seating at the Palais des Nations.

17 OCTOBER — Worldwide

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: UNDP offices in 174 countries and territories commemorate the occasion through special events ranging from concerts to races and art exhibits.

www.netaid.org

1999

www.netaid.org

► *Continued from previous page*

Committee. On the technology side is John Chambers, President and CEO of Cisco Systems. His interest in finding ways to promote education and raise public awareness through the Internet dovetailed with UNDP's search for a vehicle to expand its public outreach. Concert

JAMES ZAMMUTO

Mark Malloch Brown meets with NetAid partners.

promoters and producers Ken Kragen, Harvey Goldsmith, Jeff Pollack and Don Mischer, will help to bring NetAid to the stage and entertainment to the website. Kragen was the organizer of "We Are The World" and "Hands Across America."

ROBERT MAASS/UNDP

John Chambers and Djibril Diallo view a live webcast on 27 April at the United Nations.

Goldsmith collaborated with Bob Geldof on "Live Aid," which raised US$225 million. Mischer, a producer and director of live events, created the memorable opening and closing ceremonies of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Pollack owns a media-consulting firm and is a music consultant for major Hollywood films, including *You've Got Mail*, *As Good as it Gets*, and *Sleepless in Seattle*. ■

THE WEBSITE

Linking People

ROBERT MAASS/UNDP

Tackling Poverty

The NetAid website designed by KPMG has two objectives: first, to launch the NetAid campaign and showcase the projects and multimedia events; and second to create a dynamic global forum on eradicating extreme poverty.

Scheduled for launch on 8 September, the website will highlight anti-poverty programmes already underway throughout the developing world. Visitors to the site will be able to learn about the work of UNDP, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, individuals and governments. They will read about various projects, including those designed to provide a basic education for girls, the clean-up of rivers and lakes, the creation of small businesses for the poor and ways in which the dispossessed can participate in decisions that will change their lives. Visitors to the site will also learn what they can do as individuals to join the global battle against poverty.

PEDRO CUTE/UNDP

For the first time, development experts, foundations, international agencies, students and individuals will be able to access a website where poverty eradication programmes that have made a difference are listed, from the remotest corners of the earth to cities in developing countries. The projects will be listed under five categories: hunger, which will include projects that are meeting the basic needs of the poor; human rights, which will include programmes on women's and children's rights; Third World Debt, which will list, among other initiatives, successful microcredit projects; environment, which will have projects for indigenous people, clean water for the poor, saving forests and cleaning up cities; and refugees, which will list projects that have helped displaced people.

The programmes will be actual case studies, showing best practices from villages, communities and cities of the developing world. Visitors to the site will not see dry project reports but will actually read about the lives, hopes and achievements of the poor—the men, women and children who have benefited from anti-poverty programmes. For example, they may read about a poor mother of three, in Haiti, who speaks of a project that changed her life because it brought clean water to the slums where she lives with her family. Or they can review the case of Razia Begum, a poor village woman, in Bangladesh, who says "I can look forward to a steady income now by selling vegetable seedlings from this plot of land," which she purchased with a $65 loan from UNDP.

The NetAid site will have links to other websites involved in similar development projects. The organizers aim to highlight the successes of programmes that have helped the poor and to encourage the international community, foundations, the private sector and individuals to channel their efforts to eradicate extreme poverty in the new millennium. ■

A CLINIC BRINGS NEW HOPE TO NAPALA

By Robert Maass

Napala, Mozambique—"I haven't had a pair of shoes since I left the army in 1958," says Lino Januario Saina, as he walks barefoot with his son Pedro to a field on the outskirts of this Mozambican village, where he will plant cashew trees alongside maize, cassava, beans, and other crops.

Lino is again cultivating land he was forced to leave when civil war broke out 20 years ago. "Between 1976 and 1978, the government told villagers around here to leave the countryside and move to larger towns," Lino says. "Renamo (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique) a rebel group, was in control here. The war was going on all around us. We left with nothing but some of our animals. Our houses were burned, many people died, food was scarce, and everyone suffered a lot."

During the 16-year civil war, 1.5 million Mozambicans fled to neighbouring countries, more than three million were internally displaced and a million were killed.

When Lino returned in 1992, after a peace accord was signed between rebel forces and the government, he discovered that his farm was littered with land mines. "It took a long time to remove them, and some mines still remain, but we at least know where most of them are," he says.

Like many others in Napala, for the last five years, Lino has been struggling to rebuild his life and regain his livelihood. It was only in 1998 that the village was reconnected to other parts of the Nampula province by a new road. That same year, a new health centre opened, making basic health care available to villagers who had learned to go without services for decades. The centre was built with support from a Local Development Fund created by the government and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), which is administered by the United Nations Development Programme.

Helping at the grassroots

The Fund is part of a pilot effort to promote grassroots development among the rural poor, rebuild communities and give villagers more control over the decisions that affect their lives. The Local Development Fund initiative has a budget of US$6 million, with approximately half of the funding coming from the Netherlands.

When launched in 1995, UNCDF's Mozambique programme aimed to help the government decentralize planning and finances to provinces and districts. This was no small task for a country that had had a centrally planned economy since 1975. That year, when Mozambique gained its independence, the new socialist regime did away with the country's traditional system of governance, which revolved around tribal and community leaders. Taking away the political power of local leaders resulted in the elimination of their religious and ceremonial roles and created a social void in villages everywhere. It also offended those who saw the traditional system as an important part of the country's cultural heritage.

But since the settlement of the country's civil conflict, the govern-

ment has recognized the importance of traditional leaders in local society and the pivotal role they can play in the new drive toward decentralization.

In 1995 UNCDF started helping the government expand its decentralization initiative through "participatory development," which entails asking communities to set their own priorities. As part of this plan, the government sent representatives from provincial and district offices to the neediest communities to explain to the villagers that funds would become available for rehabilitation or construction of infrastructure, such as schools, health posts, water services, roads and bridges.

UNCDF also helped to train district officials to design strategic development plans and appraise projects. At the level of the "administrative unit," which is smaller than the district, local "consultative councils," comprising religious leaders, community representatives, merchants and others, were invited to participate in formulating five-year district-development plans.

Throughout the project, maintaining a low profile has been an important consideration. UNCDF staff in Nampula province, for example, work within government planning agencies. Vehicles used by the UN and aid-donor representatives have no special logos. Staff want to be seen as members of the communities they serve.

A village votes for health care

In Napala, consultations with community groups followed by a village-wide vote resulted in the decision to construct the health centre. Without the centre, getting basic medical care required an arduous 20-kilometre walk. Only 39 percent of the country's population has access to any kind of health services. As one of the world's poorest countries, Mozambique has a per capita annual income of only $80, and 200,000 children under the age of five die every year from preventable diseases. Life expectancy is 46 years.

Joao Abilio Viraneque, 41, Napala's village chief, echoes the sentiment of his neighbours. "We're happy to have the health centre. Since December, we've had 31 cases of cholera in the village. The centre has helped us deal with this."

It is daybreak, and a crowd of more than 75 people gathers at the entrance of the centre. Joaquina Leguetho, the village midwife helped a woman in the community deliver a baby boy during the night. The mother is 15 years old, and the baby was born two months premature. The baby had difficulty swallowing and his hands were blue. The village nurse, Mendes Joaquim Fanito, is there to examine the child. He determines that the problem is too serious for the Napala health centre to handle, so the mother and newborn are taken to a larger clinic in the town of Muecate, 20 kilometres away.

"Before the health post I delivered babies at my house, and it was much riskier," says Leguetho. "Now people are brought here, and it's really much better. In the past, many people relied only on traditional remedies for ailments and would often just die at home."

Joaquina adds, "In 1995 the government came and asked what we wanted, but nothing happened. There were plenty of promises, but nothing came about. Then in 1996 they came again, doing surveys of different groups here. We didn't expect any results." But to the surprise of many, there were results. The new health centre serves not only the 7,000 residents of Napala, but also many more in the surrounding hamlets. During clinic hours one recent day, at least half a dozen parents arrived from Mademo with their malnourished children. They came from a village where the only food crop grown was cassava, which is not nutritious enough for a healthy diet. The doctor advised the villagers to grow vegetables, as well, to feed their children. The clinic provides both medical help and advice to villagers about cleanliness, diet and sanitation.

According to Anne Nielsen, UNCDF's administrative management advisor to Nampula's Ministry of Planning and Finance, "What's become obvious is that unless the services desired are within the government's own programme, it is not sustainable. After the war, many non-governmental organizations came in and built health centres and other infrastructure without knowing if the government had funds to sustain them. Now, unless the project is approved and has a rolling budget for three years, the district cannot spend the money."

Nielsen adds that local public servants have the best knowledge of the reality on the ground. As decentralization moves forward, government workers take more pride in their jobs because they implement policies that they and their constituents have formulated together.

The Local Development Fund and decentralization programmes are also helping stamp out corruption and mismanagement. Transparent systems for procurement, strict quality controls and timetables for achieving goals have all helped build confidence in the government's ability to provide services.

The national government continues to learn from the experiences of the Local Development Fund and to make changes along the way, with a view toward possible nationwide replication in two years. Though there have been obstacles in its implementation, the Fund has yielded tangible benefits to a rural population that had been cut off from central government services. Napala has been helped by its health centre, but much more is needed. There is no permanent schoolhouse, so children commonly get their lessons outside, on the ground, in the shade of a large tree. And the village has no shops where farmers can sell their produce. These are the next priorities identified through the district surveys.

As Lino Januario Saina sits in the shade of a mango tree, he contemplates his life of 61 years. "I like being a farmer, and perhaps one of my sons will follow in my footsteps. I dream for my children to get more of an education, and now I think there is a chance that they may get it." ■

Robert Maass is a freelance photojournalist based in New York. His work has appeared in numerous publications including Newsweek, Fortune *and* The New York Times Magazine. *He also writes children's books and has just completed his 10th book.*

Getting water at the only pump in the village.

DISPLACED PEOPLE

OLD DREAMS, NEW LIFE

By Theresa Agovino

Crimea, Ukraine—Muydaba Selimov stands outside the one-room cinderblock that should have been a comfortable five-room house. He gave up thinking he would be able to afford to complete it years ago. Now the 63-year-old largely worries if he'll be able to find the US$100 he will need when winter comes to buy coal to heat the house he shares with his wife.

Many of the muddy roads in the settlement where Selimov lives are lined with mirror images of his home, providing a metaphor for the expectations of many of the Crimean Tatars. They were deported along with Armenians, Bulgarians Germans, and Greeks, from their motherland, the Crimean province of Ukraine, in 1944 after Stalin accused them of collaborating with the Nazis. Most of the Crimean Tatars wound up living in what is now Uzbekistan but was once part of the Soviet Union. But since 1989, and especially since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Tartars have been flooding back to the Crimea only to discover that while it is possible to go home, it is not a welcoming place.

In their absence, the Tatars' homes were occupied by Ukrainians and Russians who had been told the deportees were traitors. In the beginning of the repatriation process, some Tartars started squatter settlements near their homes. Clashes erupted in the settlements as police and locals tried to evict the Tartars. Eventually the government allocated residential land to them for settlements, but it was bare and lacked infrastructure.

Today, the settlement areas still lack basic community services, such as paved roads, running water, electricity and schools. Only 10 percent of the households have electricity; eight percent have running water. Many homes are unheated and unfinished. Selimov is fatalistic about his future. He is calm when stating his fear that he and his wife could die of hunger. He was nine years old when he watched his mother die of starvation on the trip to central Asia. "I may die of hunger; I didn't return to my homeland to live in luxury, but to die in my homeland," says Selimov, who wears patched cotton pants and a bare thread jacket to protect him from the biting winds.

Complicating the economic picture is the spectre of ethnic tensions in Crimea. Relations between the Tatars, who are Muslim, and the Russians and Ukrainians, who are Christian Orthodox, are cool to cordial. Intermingling is limited.

UNDP facilitates resettlement

In 1995, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the United Nations Crimea Integration and Development Programme to lessen ethnic tension and contribute to political stability by facilitating resettlement. This was the first programme to be set up by an international organization to assist in the resettlement of the deported people of Crimea. The programme aims to improve basic living conditions and expand employment opportunities. For example, in Kamenka settlement, roads have been paved and a school and health centre built.

The warm school house

In addition to infrastructure works, the UNDP programme financed a bright and airy two-story grammar school that employs 12 teachers who formerly couldn't find work because they lacked the proper papers. Opened in the fall of 1998, the school has 175 students. "It killed me to be away from students," says Munira Useinova, who has been a teacher for 24 years and now has a job in the school. She had been unemployed since she moved to the Crimea from Uzbekistan in 1997.

The 46-year-old was born in exile, but inherited her parents yearning to move to the Crimea, even though she had a reasonably nice lifestyle

"It killed me to be away from students," says Munira Useinova.

in Uzbekistan. The problem was she never considered Uzbekistan her home. "This is where my ancestors are from," says Useinova. "They were forced to leave here like animals. That was not right."

However, returning has not filled the void she had when living in Uzbekistan. She and her family live in an unfinished home with no heating. And beyond the physical discomfort, there is the disenchantment derived from seeing so many of her compatriots unemployed and purposeless.

Not only is the school literally warmer than Useinova's home, it also gives her a sense of gratification, because she believes it is part of a process that will help the younger generation adjust to their motherland. Education is key to that process and having a school in their own town makes the children feel more at home. "This is such a nice place for the students to come. It is warm and light," says Useinova. "They come here, and they are in a welcoming atmosphere, and it makes them feel good."

A clinic for the settlers

Like Useinova, Pheeruza Abibulaeva derives a tremendous satisfaction from helping her people even though she finds the plight of Tatars troubling. Abibulaeva is a family doctor at the year-old health centre financed by the same UNDP programme. Previously, the 36-year-old was a doctor in a government-run clinic that had two rooms with no electricity and hardly any equipment or medication. The health centre is a clean, spacious building that provides the community with basic medical services. It employs three family physicians, two pediatricians and one gynaecologist. Dentists and other specialists make periodic visits. Before the centre opened, the nearest clinic was 60 kilometres away.

"Before people would go to the doctors only when there was a real emergency. There was no preventive medicine. No sense of sustained care," says Dr. Abibulaeva. Yet, she still worries about her patients. "Sometimes I write them a prescription and they ask me how much it costs, and I worry they won't fill it because of the money."

Still, she says she doesn't regret coming to the Crimea with her parents even though she was born in Uzbekistan. "You grow up hearing all these stories about your homeland and it makes you want to live there. It is kind of hard to explain," says Dr. Abibulaeva.

Promoting tolerance and peace

A crucial element in the UNDP programme is to include the local population, particularly the deportees, so that community representatives are involved in all facets of the projects. The Tatars represent the bulk of those deported, but Armenians, Bulgarians and Greeks who were also forced to leave are now returning.

"There is potential for violent conflict here. In order to avoid it we have to invest now," says Merlin Udho, chief technical adviser of the UN Crimea Integration and Development Programme. "If people don't see solutions to problems they could decide to opt for more radical ways of dealing with them."

The programme has already helped many individuals. For example, one major problem facing the Tatars is that they don't have Ukrainian citizenship because they can't afford to pay the $100 required by Uzbekistan to relinquish their citizenship in that country. The lack of papers makes it difficult for them to get many types of jobs. The citizenship issue is being dealt with by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). According to UNHCR the number of formerly deported people with Uzbek citizenship in July 1998 was around 80,000.

The Tatars have an unemployment rate of about 67 percent, while the estimated national average is between 30 and 40 percent. However, because the UNDP programme is community-based, citizenship requirements can be circumvented.

The UNDP programme is carried out in close cooperation with UN agencies, such as UNHCR, and is supported by the donor community (Canada, Greece, The Holy See, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), to the tune of $3.3 million. The programme has already provided basic social services to two pilot communities totaling 20,500 people and is expanding its activities to reach up to 40,000. In addition, it has been bolstered by $1 million in humanitarian aid from Italy and the UN Children's Fund.

"If people don't see solutions to problems they could decide to opt for more radical ways of dealing with them."

During Phase One of the project (1995-1998), two community-based credit unions and business support centres were established and the local population was trained in the management of credit unions and business development. So far, $4 million of a $15 million budget has been spent to improve life in the settlements. The programme is slated to run though the year 2000.

As the technical adviser, Udho says she is pleased with the progress of the programme. "We've achieved quite a bit. The beneficiaries of the school and clinic are from different ethnic backgrounds. People are working together," says Udho. "Now we have to link all the components. We need to devote more to economic development."

The Ukrainian government is committed to solving the problems related to the resettlement of the returnees, but does not have the funding needed.

The draw of a homeland

At 68, Kerime Useinova, is no stranger to hardship. She was 12 when she was deported to Uzbekistan. She was never able to finish high school and did everything from picking cotton to fixing machinery to help her family survive. Eventually, she married a miner and they lived in relative comfort. Now, she looks around and sees despair and misery among the Tatars, but she doesn't regret coming back. She just hopes that it won't be in vain.

"I never wanted to live in discomfort and dirt again," says Useinova, whose head is covered by a scarf that is as colourful as the carpets that decorate the walls of her home. "But I had the desire to come back. I had to do it for my children. I wanted them to know that we didn't collaborate with the enemy. I want my children to be proud of who they are." ■

Theresa Agovino is a Budapest-based freelance journalist who has written for the San Francisco Chronicle, Newsweek *and the* Chronicle of Higher Education.

FAITH HOPE LOVE

An innovative initiative for fighting AIDS

By Cherie Hart

Odessa, Ukraine—Imagine an organization in which commercial sex workers, drug addicts, local militia, doctors and psychologists work together towards a common goal. They may appear strange bedfellows, but the strength of their teamwork actually depends on their differences. Their shared objective is to prevent the spread of HIV, the virus which leads to Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Their vehicle is a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-assisted self-help organization, ***Faith, Hope, Love****, which carries out HIV prevention projects among Odessa's commercial sex workers, many of whom are also intravenous drug users.*

Working all hours of the day and night in this port city on the Black Sea, Faith, Hope, Love's volunteers cater to the health and psychological needs of Odessa's 2,500 female sex workers. Three times a week, even in sub-zero temperatures, a team consisting of a psychologist and two sex workers from the organization, cruises the streets in a small car, or "mobile trust centre." The team arrives with sacks of condoms, educational material, medicines and information on where the women can get medical counselling and treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases. The centres serve as many as 100 of Odessa's sex workers on a single night. On any given evening, they dispense more than 400 condoms. In the early morning hours, they provide clean needles to drug users who awake needing a morning fix.

"We tell them on the streets that we don't need your name and we don't care about what you do for a living, we just want to help you from getting infected," says Tatyana Semikop, who runs the unusual non-governmental organization. According to surveys carried out by Faith, Hope, Love, nearly 50 percent of Odessa's female sex workers use drugs; more than half suffer from sexually-transmitted diseases, such as syphilis, which dramatically increase the possibility of HIV infection. "Our aim is to change their risk behaviour in a non-threatening way," adds Semikop, who is a major in the local police department.

Faith, Hope, Love was launched in 1997 with a grant of US$50,000 from UNDP.

Our aim is to change their risk behaviour in a non-threatening way.

At the outset, its dozens of volunteers conducted a behavioural research survey of the bars, casinos, boat docks, railway stations and side streets of Odessa, a metropolis of 1.5 million people. The local militia supplemented these efforts with advice on how and where to find the sex workers, while doctors and psychologists from the city's Health Department provided expertise and support. To reach those most at risk, Semikop sought the help of the sex workers themselves and through them, gained access to and the trust of the women working the streets.

The need for this offbeat collaboration was confirmed by local government officials. "Sex workers are a closed group," says Loseva Valida, head of the Health Department of Odessa. "We couldn't work directly with them because we couldn't get access to them. They won't trust us, but they will trust non-governmental organizations."

When asked if her police duties conflict with her work on the streets and especially with the "Mafia" that runs the sex rings, she replies, "I have nothing to do with the Mafia while implementing the project. Our aim is to prevent HIV/AIDS in high risk groups, which female sex workers represent."

Getting results

The message of Faith, Hope, Love appears to be getting out. "I have seen a huge increase in the use of condoms over the past year," says 26-year-old Ala, who quit her job as a hairdresser to make 10 times more money, or $600 a month, as a commercial sex worker in Odessa. "I am particular about who is a client. If a man refuses to use a condom, I refuse to go with him. Most of the girls want the men to use condoms," she adds.

"We can see positive results in this project," says Pedro Pablo Villanueva, UNDP's Resident Representative in Ukraine. "We already see behavioural changes in the target population. These results are due to the hard work of the local government, non-governmental organizations and the media. This scourge cannot be fought alone. UNDP is already looking to expand this kind of locally-based initiative," says Villanueva.

Eastern Europe's new scourge

Until the mid-1990s, most Eastern European countries appeared to have been spared the worst of the HIV epidemic. The whole of Eastern Europe had around 30,000 HIV infections among its 450 million people in 1995. But the latest estimates indicate that HIV infections in the former socialist economies of Eastern Europe have increased ninefold, from 1995's 30,000 cases to over 270,000 cases as of December 1998. There is no doubt that the warning signs for a widespread sexually-transmitted epidemic of HIV exist in many areas of Eastern Europe, say the experts. The young women and girls selling sex as a survival strategy have reached alarming proportions.

Of all the countries of the former Soviet Union, Ukraine, where the number of sex workers is put at 40,000, is the hardest hit by HIV. According to the latest estimates, nearly 200,000 people there were living with HIV in November 1998. The UN estimates that by 2010, 1.5 million Ukrainians could be affected by the disease. "Until 1991, we lived with a wall, much like the Berlin Wall," says Valery Smoliy, a Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine. "This wall gave us one advantage. We didn't have the movement of drugs and sex in Ukraine. Now the country is a transit point. The collapse of the wall influenced the dynamics of AIDS in this country," says Smoliy, who recently unveiled a national programme to fight AIDS.

It is too early to tell if Odessa is stemming the tide of HIV infections. On the positive side, initial statistics show that reported cases are rising at a slower rate. According to the local Health Department, Odessa had only 63 reported cases of new HIV infections in 1993, a number that rose to 830 in 1995 and then jumped to more than 4,000 in 1996. In 1998, however, the number of new infections dropped to 2,500. Officials predict that those figures will fall again, to 2,000 new cases, in 1999.

Prevention can work, but only if the country moves quickly and even creatively, as shown by the volunteers from Faith, Hope, Love. They prove that unconventional partnerships can be powerful forces in the fight against a common enemy. ■

Cherie Hart is chief of the audio-visual and broadcast branch of UNDP's Division of Public Affairs.

THE FISHERMEN WHO WON'T GIVE UP

By Bengt Lindström

El Llanito, Colombia—A fishing village of 3,000 people in the middle of Colombia is part of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pilot project aimed at improving the lives of fishermen in this extremely poor area of the Magdalena Medio region.

Normally, El Llanito's fishermen would be out in their canoes, casting their nets for *bocachico* and other fish. But in the past few months they have chosen to work as human dredgers. With the help of 25 million pesos (US$160,000) and expertise from UNDP, some 300 fishermen are slowly tugging away the floating islands of swamp vegetation that are clogging up the fishing area they and their ancestors have harvested for ages.

The task is arduous. Every morning, 35 fishermen cross the wide river to enter the 97 hectares of swamp. They swim, dive and slide in the muddy waters, cutting and pulling and pushing the thick grass islands that lie in waters inhabited by deadly snakes and sharp-toothed caymans. Each worker is paid a salary of 8,000 pesos a day (around $5).

"We work in batches, one week at a time," says Juan Tercero, a spokesman for the fishermen, "during this period we cannot fish, and so we earn less than normal. But we do it of our own free will. We know that this can give us and our families—our children—a better future."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PEDRO COTE / UNDP

Tercero is also one of the leaders of the fishermen's association in Magdalena Medio, where 10,000 people share the problems of poverty and swamps.

"Once we've cleaned the swamp we will seed it with new fish and regulate the catches. The *bocachicos* don't reproduce in still waters, but we've already put fish babies into the cleaned parts, 300 million so far. This will lessen the risk of overfishing and also the impact of the seasonal differences between flood and low water," says Tercero, who has convinced his neighbours to clean an additional 40 hectares, without pay, when the UNDP programme is completed.

But fishing also has its problems, given other aspects of poverty in the village. "Some of the fish is sold to customers who come here, but we prefer to go to the market in Barrancabermeja where prices are better," says Julia, one of the fishermen's wives. "The problem is getting there. We don't have a car and we've got to walk to the main road to find a bus. It's exhausting. The road is long and hot; the load is heavy; and we cannot carry any ice. Sometimes we don't reach the

market place until it closes, and then the fish is ruined."

Concern for the environment

Calix Rivera, coordinator of the swamp cleaning programme, stresses the impact that education and ecological training can have for the future of El Llanito. Rivera hopes that his son, who is now in the ninth grade, will go to college to learn the technical aspects of fishing, like swamp management, refrigeration, marketing and negotiation. A UNDP technical expert recently started giving lessons on environmental issues, and 48 children now participate in a course on conserving natural resources.

ponds in the swamp and maybe we'll try to do some farming," Tercero says.

From fishing to farming

Today the thick green-clad islands are dragged by hand to the river where streams sweep them further down the river. "It's a waste of natural resources. The floating islands create new problems downstream, they create new swamps and they worsen the sedimentation. In the future we'll have a crane to lift the islands from the river. One single patch weighs about a ton above the surface and contains all the nutrition needed for improving the soil," UNDP agricultural expert Fernando Herrera explains. "If we find the

despite an abundance of oil and gold and farming possibilities, 70 percent of the people live in deep poverty. The unemployment rate in this region, which covers 30,000 square kilometres and has 800,000 people, is the highest in Colombia; 70 percent of the workers do not have full-time jobs.

UNDP has initiatives like El Llanito, in more than 20 other fishing communities in this region. Some of the other poverty eradication programmes include growing and marketing vegetables, fruits and dairy products and training to empower youth and women to define their needs.

PETRO COLOMBIA

Islands of swamp vegetation being dragged manually to the river.

Clinging to the banks of the big Magdalena river—one of the most important arteries of Colombia—El Llanito is hidden behind partly deserted grazing areas and farming plots, and is about an hour's bus ride from Barrancabermeja, a city of oil fields.

"You see the water? Can you see how polluted it is? We're suing Ecopetrol (the state oil company) for destroying the fishing areas with oil residues and salt water from the drilling holes. We are sure to win the case and, when we do, we'll invest in more right technique maybe the production of ecological fertilizers will be a new project in this area," he adds.

"Once we've cleaned the swamp, we will seed it with new fish and regulate the catches."

UNDP is supporting development and poverty eradication initiatives, to the tune of $500,000, in the Magdalena Medio region, where

Island of peace

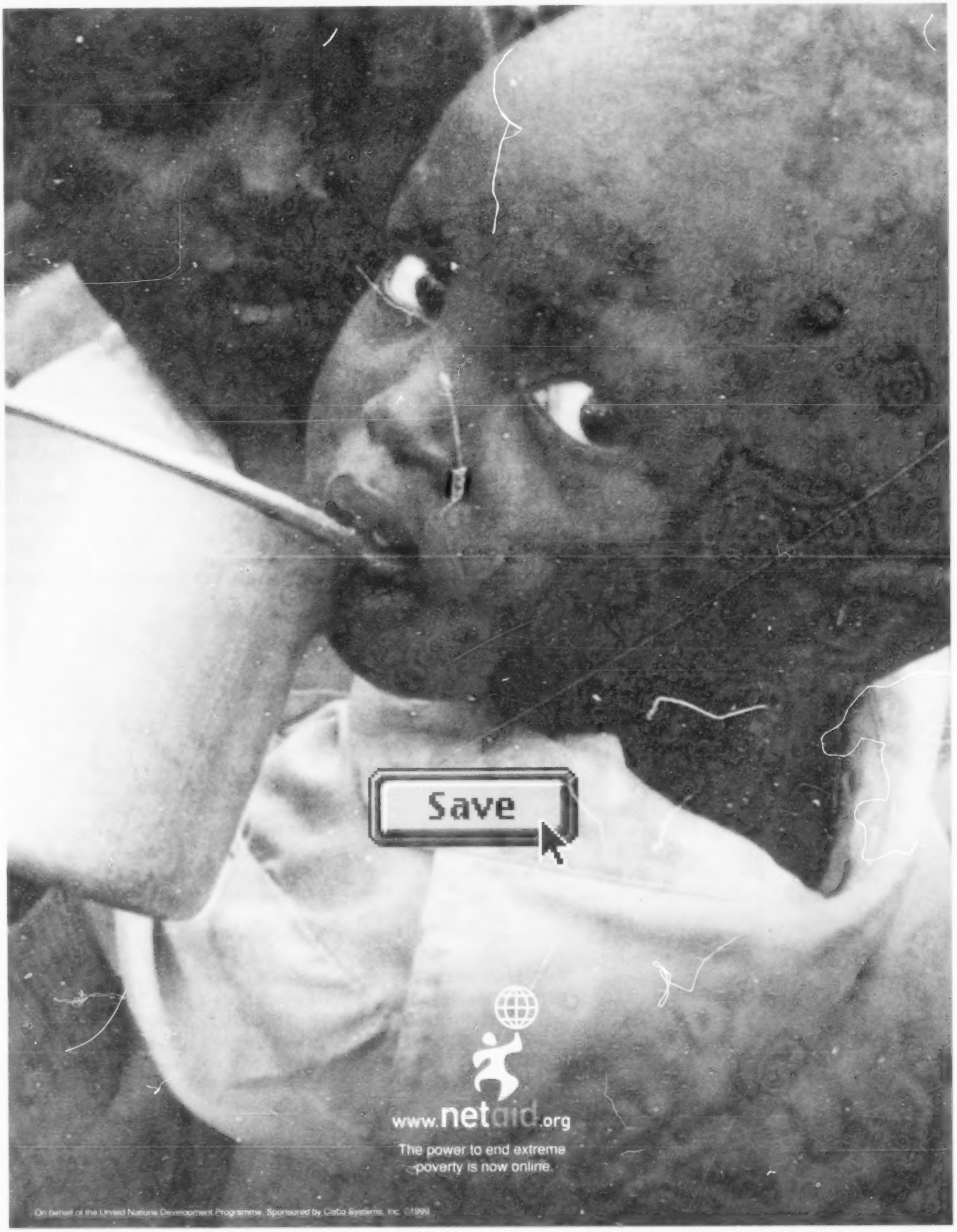
The word "peace" is almost sacred in this part of Colombia. So far El Llanito has been spared the violence that afflicts Barrancabermeja and other towns and villages. Contrary to most pueblos in Magdalena Medio, there have been no attacks or threats directed to the people here. Nobody has left because of fear. This is, sad to say, a very rare situation in Colombia, where each day, every hour, 28 men, women and children leave their homes because of political violence. According to

the UN Commissioner on Human Rights, there are one million people in Colombia living in internal exile.

"The violence is destroying Colombia and the situation is deteriorating. Poverty is growing rapidly," says Francisco de Roux, chairman of the non-governmental organization, Programa de Desarrollo y Paz (Peace and Development Programme) in Magdalena Medio. The lack of justice, the violence and the absence of governmental administration are dooming the people and the society to a future without any hope. "There are lots of good ideas about how to improve the situation among the population, but without peace there can be no development. That is why it is important to nurture these pockets of peace and to help the people who might otherwise join the guerillas or para-military groups. For this reason the initiatives taken by the UNDP are so important in this region," de Roux explains.

The overall objectives of UNDP's peace and development programme for the region are to fight poverty, empower people and have all actors of society participate in bringing about positive change. ■

Bengt Lindström is a former correspondent to Latin America. During his 32 years as a reporter he has worked in almost 80 countries, covering everything from politics to culture to sports. He works for Dagens Nyheter, *Sweden's largest daily morning paper.*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NOTEBOOK

UNDP BOOK PROPOSES NEW FORMULAS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

New proposals for a major overhaul in the way countries work together at the international level are examined in *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*, a provocative book released earlier this year by the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Office of Development Studies.

The book contains contributions from a roster of prominent economists, such as Jeffrey Sachs of the Harvard Institute for International Development, Amartya Sen of Cambridge University, Nancy Birdsall of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Joseph Stiglitz of the World Bank.

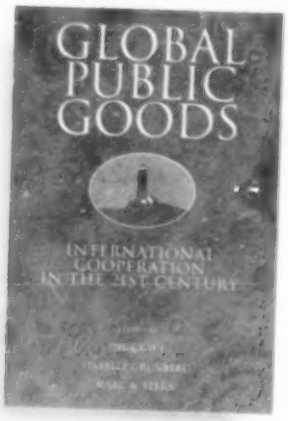
They point to the international community's present pattern of ad hoc responses to ongoing global problems, and argue that a new system is required to fulfill global needs that are currently not being met. These include the need for financial stability, a pollution-free environment, the elimination of poverty, and the containment of disease.

According to Inge Kaul, who led the team of editors that produced the study, "Some people say that in the face of globalization, like the wind, we are helpless. This is nonsense in our view. If countries act together, they can make a difference. The globe is manageable. It must not end up in turmoil."

What are public goods?

Just as certain public goods must be provided at the national level, such as clean air, water, traffic rules, and security, at the international level there are global public goods: issues that transcend borders. Global public goods include concerns ranging from ensuring stable financial markets to confronting environmental challenges, such as global warming.

The book's authors explain how the failure of international institutions to provide these global goods is directly responsible for



Available from
Oxford University Press
To order in the US
call 1 800 451 7556
Website: http://www.oup/usa.org
Price: US$24.95, 546 pages
Website: http://www.undp.org/globalpublicgoods

MOROCCO'S POOR PRESERVE CULTURAL RICHES

Ait Benhaddou, Morocco—Visitors must pick their way across a small river, stepping from stone to stone, to approach the hauntingly beautiful kasbahs of Ait Benhaddou. For centuries, this fortified town in Morocco's Atlas Mountains guarded the lucrative camel-trading route through the Sahara Desert to Timbuktu. It was wealthy, unassailable, the stuff of legends.

Today, in an unusual poverty-reduction project begun with UNDP support, an effort is under way to restore this fortress and others. The goal is not just to repair crumbling buildings for the sake of developing tourism in an economically depressed region but also to help local people earn a livelihood and gain a stake in the preservation of the cultural heritage.

To the uninitiated, "kasbah" refers to an old quarter within an Arab city. But for Moroccans, kasbahs are a specific type of ancient dwelling constructed in a well-defined architectural style that has evolved in northern Africa over many centuries. The basic building components are blocks of packed earth and straw, or *pisé*. Roofs are made of woven willows whose bitter taste repels insects. Abstract reliefs in the classic Islamic style decorate the walls.

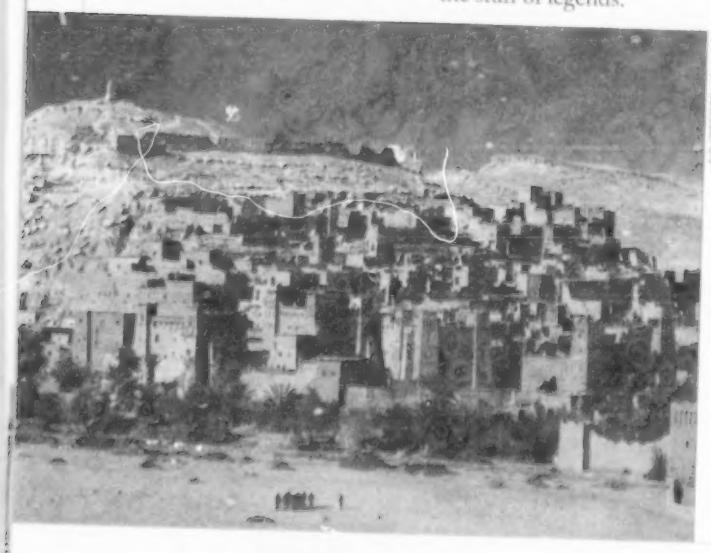
"The kasbah architecture is perfectly suited to the desert environment," says Driss Dkhissi, an anthropologist who works with the Moroccan government. "Cement houses are infernal in the summer, very cold in winter, but *pisé* construction is comfortable the year round."

In Morocco as elsewhere, recent decades have brought massive social change, including urbanization and the advent of modern technology. In the 1960s, people began abandoning the kasbahs in favour of cement houses with electricity. Those who remained in kasbahs were generally poor, with few or no income-earning opportunities. By the 1980s, it became apparent that a priceless tradition was in danger of being lost. Not only were the kasbahs falling into ruin, but the skills needed to maintain them were disappearing.

A small group of activists, including Dkhissi, lobbied for and secured financing for a programme to restore some of the best kasbahs. With funding from UNDP and the Moroccan government, work has begun on restoring the kasbahs at Ait Benhaddou and nearby Ouarzazate. Residents earn a living by working on the project. Basic services and infrastructure, such as water, electricity and sewers are being installed, reducing waste and air pollution, which in the past had taken a toll on the aging structures. For those involved in the project there is much more at stake than architecture; the real battle is against poverty. ■

By Dennis Bueckert, an Ottawa-based journalist who writes for the Canadian Press Agency.

Kasbahs cover a hillside near Ouarzazate.



many of the world's recurring crises, such as volatile financial markets, disease outbreaks and global warming. As countries are usually motivated by self-interest, they are often unwilling to act in a way that would address these global concerns.

Kaul says such behaviour is dangerous, for example, when one country doesn't implement a strong national disease prevention strategy, the disease can travel quickly and soon become a "public bad." And one country's problem can soon be keenly felt in others. "It matters what is happening in Africa. When there is Ebola virus in Africa, people in Europe start shivering."

According to Kaul, in this day of globalization, national frontiers have become increasingly irrelevant as financial transactions and communications bypass border controls. For example, the financial crises in Indonesia have had major repercussions in the United States.

The answer, according to the book is to construct an international system that provides incentives for countries to do the right thing, while working in their own national interest.

"Too often today we are blind to win-win situations," Kaul said. Countries fail to see the larger picture and opt for short-term solutions, which "become a costly affair." They have to recognize that by participating in the provision of a public good, they are helping themselves. For example, Kaul said, if international cooperation helps to stabilize markets in developing countries, the result would benefit US pension funds, which would then be able to invest in more diverse markets.

New mechanisms are necessary to achieve this type of cooperation. One suggestion calls for a new United Nations Trusteeship Council to intervene in negotiations that have become "stuck," such as the Kyoto talks on climate change, by providing advice to the participants and helping to remove uncertainties that are blocking progress on a global agreement.

The study also suggests that the group of the world's major economic powers, the G8, be expanded to 16 countries to include the major developing countries. "These emerging markets have to be brought on board," Kaul said.

Commenting on the ideas contained in the book, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said "It is not beyond the powers of political volition to tip the scales toward a more secure peace, greater well-being, social justice, and environmental sustainability." But, he added, "no country can achieve these global public goods on its own, and neither can the global marketplace. Thus our efforts must now focus on the missing term of the equation: global public goods." ■

By Daniel Shepard, a free-lance journalist who reports on the environment, human rights, development and the United Nations.

UNDP OPENS ELECTRONIC WINDOW ON THE WORLD

United Nations Development Programme
Bureau of Public Affairs
undp
newsfront
Egyptian women in two poor regions to get small business loans through UNDP
World Media Headlines

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) broke new ground earlier this year with the launch of *Newsfront*, a website that is updated daily to feature the organization's human development concerns and successes in the field.

Newsfront is hosted by UNDP's Division of Public Affairs which has designed the site to offer easy access to UNDP information materials, most of which can be downloaded free of charge. Visitors to www.undp.org/dpa have direct access to project stories, press releases, statements by the UNDP Administrator, the weekly UNDP Flash bulletin and articles from CHOICES. There is a newsroom for journalists who can access press kits and other documents often unavailable in hard copy in developing nations or in donor countries without UN offices. Press releases, statements and back issues of *Newsfront* are archived on the site.

Newsfront also carries UN and development-related articles of the day from some of the world's newspapers, magazines and news services, such as Inter Press and UN Wire. The website has hotlinks to UNDP publications including the *Human Development Report 1999, Overcoming Human Poverty 1998* and *Global Public Goods*. All can be ordered online. A photo gallery provides free access to photographs that can be downloaded and used as long as the proper credits are given. Parallel French and Spanish language versions of the site are being developed. ■

By Ian Steele, chief of the media branch of UNDP's Division of Public Affairs.

PUBLICATIONS

Poverty in Transition
Published by the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP

Available from UN Publications:
To order in the US
call 1 800 253 9646
or, via the website at
www.un.org/publications
Price: US$45.00, 224 pages

No region in the world has suffered such reversals in the 1990s as the countries of the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, where the number of poor has risen by over 150 million. This report attempts to derive lessons from the first phase of these countries' transition from planned to market economies, in the hope of easing the road ahead. The report also highlights successes scored by some nations in the region. ■

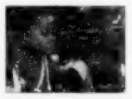
The Paradox of Hunger and Abundance
by Eric Kashambuzi

Published by Rivercross Publishing Inc, Orlando, Florida:
To order in the US
call 407 876 7720
E-mail: editor@rivercross.com
Price: US$18.95, 175 pages

This book focuses on hunger problems in the developing world, especially Africa, and explores how politics and policies of food security are the main cause of localized food shortages. The book examines the use of export-oriented policies in developing countries and how, paradoxically, some countries overwhelmed by starvation are gearing their agriculture to the production of cash crops for export. The author recommends that to attack poverty and restore peace and security, planners in the developing countries have to give this issue priority together with their partners in the developed world. ■

MATTERS OF FACT

Information is drawn from the *Human Development Report 1999*, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme. The report is published in English by Oxford University Press (paperback ISBN 0-19-521562-1; hardbound 0-19-521561-3), and in nine other language editions by a variety of publishers.

Globalization. Developing countries have 80% of the world's population but account for less than 20% of global GDP. In East Asia per capita **incomes** today are at least seven times what they were in 1960. › But in sub-Saharan Africa and many **least developed** countries, per capita incomes are lower than they were in 1970.  Foreign direct investment topped US$400 billion in 1997, but 58% of it went to industrial countries, 37% to developing countries and only 5% to the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe. › Multinationals now dwarf some governments in **economic power**. In 1997, Ford Motor Company's sales totaled $147 billion, while the 1997 GDP of South Africa was $129 billion and the GDP of Malaysia was $98 billion. By 1998, the 10 top pesticides producers controlled 85% of a $31 billion global **market**. › Industrial countries hold 97% of the patents worldwide. Production losses resulting from the East Asian financial crisis and its **global repercussions** are projected to reach $2 trillion over the period from 1998 to 2000. The **crisis** has resulted in millions of people losing their jobs. › The assets of the 200 **richest** people are more than the combined income of 41% of the world's people. A yearly contribution of 1% of their wealth or $8 billion could provide **universal access** to primary education for all.